

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church, Gosford

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

PARISH NEWSLETTER

~ Number 83, March-April 2009 ~

PARISH LIFE: CHURCH CLEANUP ON MONDAY APRIL 13TH

On Monday April 13th, the Australian Easter Monday holiday, we will have our usual general clean-up day at church in preparation for Pascha. This will be the usual major clean-up, with everything in the church and hall being washed, scrubbed and polished in preparation for our Holy Week and Easter services. As we will have our first midnight Paschal service since 2004, we are especially keen to have the church looking nice. All those who can help are asked to attend, especially younger people who are able to assist with some of the more physical tasks. A list of tasks will be prepared and pinned up in the church hall from Sunday April 5th to ensure that everyone can identify something useful to do. A light Lenten lunch will be prepared by the Ladies' Auxiliary and served afterwards for all those working.

SPIRITUAL LIFE: CONFESSION AND COMMUNION DURING GREAT LENT



All parishioners are encouraged to confess their sins and receive Holy Communion at least once during Great Lent. At the time of preparation of this newsletter, we have only two Divine Liturgies remaining during Lent: on Sunday April 5th, the day of commemoration of Saint Mary of Egypt; and on Saturday April 11th, Lazarus Saturday. It is possible to confess on the evenings before these services, and in the morning before Divine Liturgy, or at other times by arrangement with Father James (0428-639156 or rev.james.carles@rocor.org.au). Those parishioners who

confess to another priest should let Father James know before coming to Holy Communion that they plan to receive the Holy Mysteries that day. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion at the midnight Paschal Liturgy may confess at any time during Holy Week; there are services on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights.

PARISH LIFE: HOLY MYSTERY OF ANOINTING WITH OIL («СОБОРОВАНИЕ») ON SUNDAY APRIL 6TH

On the evening of Sunday April 6th at 6.00pm we will have the special service of general anointing («Соборование»). The Holy Mystery of Anointing with Oil for the healing of sickness is referred to in the Bible by Saint James, the Brother of the Lord. He says,

"If you are sick, ask the priests to come and pray for you. Ask them to put olive oil on you in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). Ideally, seven priests together perform this mystery, but it can be done by less, and even by one priest alone. In the service of Anointing with Oil there are seven epistle readings (readings from the "Letters" in the New Testament) and seven readings from the Holy Gospel. The priests pray that God will bless the oil (which is usually mixed with wine, a practice that calls to mind the Good Samaritan, who poured oil and wine on the wounds of the man who fell among thieves) and that it will be for the healing of the soul and body of the person to be anointed. There are also prayers for the forgiveness of sins, the ultimate cause of all sickness. Each person is then anointed on the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, lips, chest, and both sides of the hands. During Great Lent, it is the practice in all parishes of our diocese (and indeed, of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia) to have a service of General Anointing in which everyone comes to be anointed for the healing of spiritual and physical sickness. This is an important part of the preparation for the celebration of Pascha. Some church writers say that this Holy Mystery in part absolves us from those sins that we have forgotten or are unaware of. The service takes between 2 and 3 hours. All are encouraged to attend, and those wishing to do so should endeavour to confess their sins beforehand. In previous years Metropolitan Hilarion has joined us for this service, but this will not be possible this year, as Vladyka remains in the United States under after Pascha.

PARISH LIFE DURING FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2009

February was a month of baptisms in our parish, with four people received into the Holy Orthodox Church that month. On Saturday February 14th, 11 month-old Charli Alexandra Momot, the daughter of Tanya Momot and Arthur Yiaromelos, was baptised. Her godparents were George Skorniakoff and Victoria Statzenko. Family and friends afterwards gathered in Point Clare for a festive lunch. The newly-baptised Charli Alexandra came to church the next day with her grandfather, Alexander - who, despite being blind, read the Hours that morning - and with mother Tanya, to receive Holy Communion for the first time.

On Saturday February 28th, three generations were baptised together: Larissa Tishkevich, her daughter Elena Pillai, and Elena's daughter Sophia. Sophia's godparents were Michael Babich and Oksana Sutulova, and Elena's sponsor was Yaroslava Medko. Many family and friends gathered in the church hall afterwards. All three newly-baptised Orthodox Christians were in church the following day, Sunday March 1st, to receive Holy Communion for the first time.

On Saturday March 7th, there were two more baptisms. On this occasions, the twin sons of Yuri and Natasha Borodin, David and Mark, were baptised. Their godparents were Anton and Aksana Sidorkin. The boys received Holy Communion for the first time on

Sunday March 29th. The parish extends congratulations to all the newly-baptised, together with their parents, godparents, and extended families.

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Sunday February 15th, the Great Feast of the Meeting of the Lord. The AGM proceeded uneventfully, with all previous parish councillors re-elected. Andrew Kfoury and Sebastian Reid were also re-elected to the Auditing Committee, with new member Philip Clarke appointed to assist them in their work. Office-bearers will be elected by the Parish Council when it meets on Tuesday April 7th.

The regular parish fishing competition was held on Saturday February 21st. It had rained heavily during the preceding week, and rained again that day. A quieter affair than in previous years, we nevertheless had a good number of friends of the parish come along, and just under \$1000.00 was raised. \$300.00 of this was donated to Hawkesbury River Rescue, an affiliate of the Volunteer Rescue Association of Australia. A kids' fishing competition will be held one Sunday afternoon after Pascha.

March was a busy month liturgically, with 14 services. We had Divine Liturgy on three Sundays, but most of the services were shorter evening services, held only during Great Lent.

After a long absence, Hieromonk John (MacPherson) joined us for Divine Liturgy on Forgiveness Sunday, March 1st. It was also planned that Father John would serve in Gosford on Sunday March 15th, as Father James was to serve at the Cathedral in connection with a youth conference there that weekend. Unfortunately for Father John, it being his birthday, a flat battery prevented him making the drive from his monastery in Monkerai, near Dungog, and so Father James served at Gosford after all.

The youth conference mentioned was a gathering of youth delegates from each parish in Australia. Gosford's delegates were Sebastian Reid, Sarah Carles, and Anna Carles. Father James gave a talk on Saturday morning entitled "Loss and Gain - Linking our Orthodox Christianity with Life", asking the youth to consider what they, as youth, personally lost or gained when drawing away from or towards God, and how they could use this experience to have an effect on their peers. There was much discussion and many good ideas put forward, and planning has already commenced on activities that will involve youth from the NSW parishes, Gosford included. More information about these youth activities will be made available in due course. Developing youth activities and leadership in our parish is extremely important as we have many children, and a meeting of our parish youth (ages roughly 13-25) will be arranged after Pascha.

The parish ladies were extremely busy during March, preparing pancakes on Sunday Sunday March 1st and piroshki on Sunday March 15th.

Towards the end of March, our parishioner Katya Rubbo travelled to Bega in South-Western NSW to visit and work with Tonia Ganin, a renowned iconographer who

frescoed the Holy Protection Church in Cabramatta, amongst others. Katya and Tonia worked on an icon of Christ enthroned. The resulting work is very beautiful and, when the final touches have been made, will be mounted in the sanctuary of our church, behind the altar. God willing, it will be there in time for our Paschal services.

PARISH LIFE: BOOKSTORE NEWS

Early in March, a number of new bookstore items arrived from Russia. Chris Dowling was back in Gosford that weekend, and he kindly priced the items and delivered them to our church. The order consisted of beautiful small icons of nearly 60 different saints; a number of Lenten cookbooks; some DVDs and CDs; edifying spiritual reading; and some prayer books. All of these items are on display in the glass cases in the church hall.

An order of English books, particularly "Jordanville" prayer books, will be placed soon.

Also on sale from Sunday March 29th has been enamelled and decorative glass Easter egg jewellery and Paschal greeting cards. These items are being looked after by energetic young parishioner, Xenia Naef, and can be purchased at the services that remain before Pascha.

PARISH LIFE: OUR 2009 WINTER CAMP, AND THE SUMMER CAMP

It has been mentioned in previous issues of this newsletter that we are already planning parish camps for July and December 2009. The Crosslands Youth and Convention Centre at Galston Gorge, often a venue over the years for Diocesan youth conferences, has been booked for the weekend of July 17th-19th. Parishioners and friends are asked to keep this weekend free for the winter camp, which will begin on Friday night and finish on Sunday afternoon. Please let Father Martin know, or email wintercamp@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au if you will be attending.

As these dates coincide with the commemoration of the Royal Martyrs of Russia, the camp this year will be dedicated to them. Matushka Marie has written a short play based on the lives of the Royal Martyrs that will be performed by the children at the camp. Anyone interested in participating should talk to her about this.

More information will be made available in due course.

For those interested, some photos from the 2008 summer camp can still be viewed online at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gosfordrussianchurch/>. The link is also available through the parish website. A 2009 summer camp is proving difficult to organise, given available dates and venues. There are two options so far: We can return to Lake Mac on the weekend of 20-21 November (\$65 adults and older children/\$55 younger children, doing the cooking ourselves) or go to the Lutanda Recreation and Conference Centre in Toukley on the weekend of 18-20 December (\$107.50 adults and older children/\$77 - \$95 younger children, with the cooking done for us). A third option is to not have a summer camp this year, which seems a shame, the camp last summer

having been such a success. Preferences should be expressed in person to Father Martin, or emailed to summercamp@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au before Pascha so as to ensure our booking.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The new Parish Council met for the first time on Tuesday March 10th. Unfortunately a number of parish councillors were unable to make it, and so the election of office-bearers was deferred. Father James reported on the AGM and outlined various plans for the year ahead. Sophia Kfoury presented the January and February accounts in a new format that allows the Parish Council to more easily identify trends and assess the financial position of the parish. A number of membership renewals and new applications were approved. Paul Pereboeff reported that there would be no charitable collection this Great Lent, but noted that new collection tins had been placed in church for the Geelong and Centennial Park parishes, both of which are undertaking significant renovations. The Parish is due to meet next on Tuesday April 7th.

PARISH LIFE: FIVE YEARS AT WEST GOSFORD

As of the first weekend in April we will have been here at West Gosford for five whole years. The first services in our new church were for Palm Sunday 2004: the vigil on Saturday April 3rd and Divine Liturgy Sunday April 4th. In the four years since then we have had, on a rough count, nearly 500 scheduled services, 3 weddings and 45 baptisms. We have managed, aided by others, to pay our \$127,000 mortgage in full, and to adorn our beautiful church with icons and other items. Our parish has indeed flourished in this time. May the Lord continue to bless us!

PARISH LIFE: SERVICES DURING APRIL AND MAY

Astonishingly, we are nearly at the end of Great Lent already! After the services on the weekend of April 4th-5th (Matins on Saturday evening, Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, and the service of General Anointing on Sunday evening), we have the last service of Great Compline at 7.00pm on Wednesday April 8th. The Holy Forty Days of Great Lent finishes on that Friday, April 10th. Between the Forty Days and Holy Week are the services commemorating the Resurrection of Lazarus, and Palm Sunday. In Gosford, we will have Matins at 7.00pm on Friday April 11th, and then Divine Liturgy at 9.00am on Saturday April 12th. At the end of Divine Liturgy on that day, pussy-willows and palm branches will be blessed in anticipation of Palm Sunday. The main services for Palm Sunday will be held this year in Wallsend.

Beginning on the evening of Palm Sunday, April 12th, and continuing on Monday and Tuesday evenings, we will have three consecutive Matins services. These are beautiful and solemn services at which we sing the troparion, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night" («Се Женихъ грядетъ»), and the exapostilarion, "Thy bridal chamber, O my Saviour" («Чертогъ твой»).

On the evening of Holy Thursday we will have Matins with the reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels, beginning at 6.00pm.

On Holy Friday, we will have Vespers with the bringing out of the Shroud of Christ at 3.00pm. The service of Lamentations before the Tomb of Christ that evening will be served in Wallsend, as will the Holy Saturday Liturgy.

On the evening of Holy Saturday, the reading of the Acts of the Holy Apostles will begin at 9.00pm. At 11.30pm, Midnight Office will begin, followed by a procession. Paschal Matins will begin at 12.00am, and will be followed by the blessing of Easter cakes, eggs, and festive foods, and then Divine Liturgy. All are welcome to stay afterwards to share in a festive meal at church.

At 11.00am on the Sunday of Pascha, Paschal Vespers will be served. This service is only 30 minutes or so in length, and consists of Paschal hymns and a Gospel reading. Those unable to be present at the midnight service can have their Easter baskets blessed, and there will be a festive morning tea for all to share. Afterwards, Father James will be visiting homes before travelling to Newcastle for a service that evening.

On the second day of Pascha, it is the custom of the clergy from the smaller parishes to gather at the parish of All Saints of Russia in Croydon, the Archbishop's chapel. Although Vladyka will be overseas until early May, Father James still plans to serve there this year.

We will have a service on the morning of Saturday April 25th, Bright Saturday, for the cutting of the artos, a special loaf of bread blessed at the main Paschal service, something that we have customarily done on the Sunday after Pascha, Thomas Sunday.

CHURCH LIFE DURING FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2009

Parishioners and friends will be aware that there have for many years been two Russian Orthodox parishes in Newcastle. One of these is Saint Nicholas', in Wallsend, the parish in which Father James serves on alternate Sundays, and the other is the Russian Orthodox Church of the Theophany, a parish of the Moscow Patriarchate. In mid-February the parish priest, Father Alexander Filchakov, returned to Russia, his father Sergei being critically ill and in need of care. Sadly, Father Alexander's departure coincided with the closure of the parish. Many of the people have since been attending services at Wallsend, and on Forgiveness Sunday, March 1, a number of them attended Divine Liturgy here in Gosford. We expect that many of them will also join us for our Paschal services this year. The closure of one's parish is hard to bear, and readers are asked to keep the parishioners of the Theophany parish in their prayers.

On Tuesday March 17th and Wednesday March 18th a number of the priests of the NSW Deanery gathered for the customary Lenten confession and concelebration. On the Tuesday the priests met at Croydon, there reading the rule of preparation before Holy Communion, serving Matins, and taking the opportunity to confess. The following

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morning, they gathered at Strathfield to serve the beautiful Presanctified Liturgy, a service performed only during Great Lent. Serving together were Archpriests Nikita Chemodakov, Michael Li, Alexander Morozow, Michael Boikov, George Lapardin, and Boris Ignatievsky; Hieromonks Joachim (Ross) and John (MacPherson); and Father James. Priest Alexander Korjenewski was also present. Following the service, the fathers enjoyed a lunch prepared by the Cathedral Sisterhood, and discussed a range of pastoral issues, particularly youth work.

DIOCESAN LIFE: PALM SUNDAY COLLECTION

In parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia it is the custom, on Palm Sunday each year, to take up a collection for the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission cares for the Ascension Convent on the Mount of Olives, the convent at Gethsemane and the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, and the Skete of Saint Chariton at Wadi Fara. As with previous collections, envelopes have been prepared to assist parishioners to put funds aside. An envelope is included with each issue of this newsletter, and additional envelopes will be available in church. The collection will be taken up at West Gosford on Lazarus Saturday, April 11th. Those unable to be in church on that day may make their contribution to the collection before then, or during Holy Week. Please give generously for the upkeep of these holy places and of the monastics who live there, offering prayers each day for all of us.

CHURCH LIFE: SISTERS FROM THE SAINT ELIZABETH CONVENT IN MINSK TO VISIT OUR DIOCESE IN MAY

In May, a small delegation of sisters from the Convent of Saint Elizabeth in Minsk, Belarus, will visit our Diocese. The convent, named after Saint Elizabeth the New Martyr, was founded in Minsk in 1999. It grew out of a sisterhood, established in 1994, that has been serving the Republican Psychiatric Hospital, a home for adults with mental illness, a home for children with special needs, and one of the city's hospitals. The first sisters of mercy - young girls, parishioners of Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Minsk - volunteered to take care of the patients of the psychiatric hospital. In 1999, several of the sisters became nuns. On the grounds of the convent there are a number of workshops which produce candles, ceramics, paint icons and make priests' vestments, in addition to embroidery woodwork and metalwork. Together with the nuns, some former patients of the hospitals work there.

In order to continue their work and to provide support for the community, a delegation is visiting Orthodox parishes, monasteries and sketes in Australia in spring and summer 2009. They will meet with priests and parishioners, talk and show a short film about the life and work of the convent, and offer the items made at our convent. God willing, the sisters will visit us in West Gosford on May 17th.

Further information about the convent can be obtained from its' website, www.obitel-minsk.by. More information about the visit will be made available in due course.

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PARISH LIFE: A PARISH DIRECTORY

For some time, Father James has maintained an informal parish directory for use when mailing or emailing out newsletters and other parish information, or contacting parish members in times of sickness or need. He is at times asked by parishioners for the contact details of others who attend church, generally so that some activity or other can be arranged. Some churches have a formal parish directory, produced annually and made available to all parish members, that lists contact details for clergy, parish councilors, and all regular worshipers. The idea of such a directory is to facilitate communication between all those involved in the life of a parish, and it can be seen that such a thing would allow the people to arrange activities and develop friendships without going through the clergy each time. Father James is working on the draft of such a directory for presentation to Parish Council in the new future. It would include names, postal addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses. Those included would need to give consent, of course, and the directory would include a Privacy Statement to ensure that users of it understood that it was wholly intended for parish use. Father James would welcome any thoughts or comments on this project.

DIOCESAN LIFE: 10TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER FOR ST JOHN THE BAPTIST SKETE

On Sunday May 10th there will be a festive dinner in Bankstown to celebrate 10 years of English language services and mission to the Orthodox Christian community of Sydney by Hieromonk Joachim, the brotherhood and congregation of Saint John the Baptist Skete, Kentlyn, publishers of the English-language journal, 'The Voice'. See the poster and leaflets in church for more information.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick: Priest Simeon; Protodeacon Christopher; our parishioner Victor (Manjetny); and also for Vasili, Eugenia, Olga, Margaret, Galina, Nun Euphrosyne, Constantin, Nikita, Kirsten, Sergei

Expectant mothers: Susannah, Kira, Mary, Svetlana, Julia

Departed: Patriarch Alexis, Metropolitan Vitaly, Metropolitan Laurus, and former parishioners and benefactors Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Kraihin), Theodore & Antonina (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina), Alexander (Dikan), and Elena (Yakupova)



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Our parish newsletter is published monthly. If you wish to receive it by post or email, please talk to Father James (0428-639156) or Katya Marcotrigiano, the parish secretary (katya.marco@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au).